

BLAKE, WILLIAM PHIPPS

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BLAKE, WILLIAM PHIPPS, known all over the world as a geologist and mineralogist, was born in New York, June ., .826. He graduated from the Sheffield Scientific School of Yale, in .852, and joined the United States Pacific Railroad exploring expedition as a mineralogist and geologist. He was successful in this connection, and became mining engineer for the Japanese government in .861, and then with R. Wumpelly organized the first school of science in Japan. His knowledge made him a man sought after in the learned institutions of the world, and took him to the uttermost parts of the earth.

In .874 he was professor of Mineralogy and Geology in College of California (now University of California); in .879 was Economical Geologist in exploration of Western States; in .895 he was professor of Geology and Mining, also Director of the School of Mines at University of Arizona.

He was the first engineer who announced that a portion of the Colorado desert was below the ocean in .854. He was denounced by some of the press as a dreamer. He never defended himself; but later engineers have verified his work as of a mining expert. It is probable professor Blake understood Arizona and its capabilities better than any man of his time, and his works upon the subject of our minerals can be read with profit by the ablest engineer of the present day.

Professor Blake became a permanent resident of Tucson in 1895, and that same year was a professor of Geology in the University of Arizona, and also a Director of the School of Mines. He became a member of the Pioneers' Historical Society on April 3, 1904.

He came to Tucson seeking the health of two of his children, one of whom died here. The other, a daughter, married Prof. Tourney, formerly of the University of Arizona, and later of Yale University. She died in the past. Subsequently his

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wife died while on one of their eastern trips.

Two years prior to the close of his successful career he was made professor emeritus of Geology by the University of Arizona; and he also held the position of territorial geologist. Professor Babcock incorporated in his report of that year a list of the publications of Prof. Blake, beginning with a series of articles in the American Journal of Science in 1850, and the list was a revelation.

No one has made a more thorough investigation, or given out more valuable information concerning Arizona and Pima County minerals than Prof. Blake. Some years past he published a volume on Arizona's Mineral Resources, and at the close of his life the Arizona Daily Star was at work on his last article on the mineral resources of Pima County. Prof. Blake read proof on this article and that day he started for California on his last trip. The article was left to be published by the Chamber of Commerce.

As an indication of the distinction attained by Prof. Blake, his biography is found in all the leading American and English Encyclopedias. The biography in the "Americana" will doubtless be of some information to those who were in the daily walks of life with Prof. Blake, yet did not fully realize the greatness of their unassuming associate.

He made that last trip to Berkely to attend the Golden Jubilee of the University of California, at which he received the degree of Doctor of Laws. A few days after he became ill with pheumonia, and in a few hours he passed away on May 22, 1910. His remains were shipped to Connecticut for burial in the family plot.

As an expert in his capabilities Prof. Blake was connected with the Paris Exposition of 1897, the Vienna Exposition of 1873, the United States Centennial Exposition of 1876, Paris Universal Exposition in 1878; also he drafted the system of classification of United States ores and minerals at the Columbia Exposition in 1893.

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SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Arizona Daily Star, May 24, 1910, p. 1; Jan. 3, 1905; June 12, 1910, p. 8, 1/2 Col.

Journal Miner, Sept. 11, 1889 p. 3, 1 1/2 Col.

Tombstone Epitaph March 27, 1882, p. 4, 1 1/2 Col.

New Standard Encyclopedia, New York, University Society, 1906, Vol. 1

Geological Survey, Bulletin No. 180, Series A., Washington Printing Office

Membership Book Pioneer Historical Society, Tucson, old vol. p. 76

Pioneer Minutes, June 5, 1910.

Who's Who, 1908-1909 p 167

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